

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Pro-Tech Services Inc.

Washington Manufacturing Services

Pro-Tech Services Participates In Value Creation For Technologies Program

Client Profile:

Pro-Tech Services is a manufacturer of sleep diagnostic products. Located in Mukilteo, Washington, the company employs less than 100 people and has grown to become a world leader in the sleep sensor industry.

Situation:

Pro-Tech Services attended a Lean 101 course held by the Washington Manufacturing Services (WMS), a NIST MEP network affiliate. WMS and the Puget Sound Center (PSC) were in the process of putting together a program to comprehensively implement lean manufacturing within several companies through an extensive education and implementation program. WMS knew that Pro-Tech Services was beginning its lean implementation initiative and brought them on board with Data I/O and two of its suppliers to participate in the "Value Creation for Technology Companies" program.

Solution:

By involving four companies instead of one in a broad lean initiative, WMS made it possible for the companies to access training dollars from PSC and share the remaining cost balance. Additionally, this method gave all the companies participating in this joint project the chance to share information and knowledge. A delivery model developed by Michael Boyer of Vision to Reality (V2R) was selected and tailored to meet the needs of the individual participating companies and stakeholders. The model included nine days of classroom training combined with six days of on-site hands-on implementation at the participating companies.

Three of the companies each hosted one of the three-day education sessions, which allowed participants to witness the processes at other companies. It also allowed students to apply their newfound knowledge of lean manufacturing principles to assess and critique processes at the hosting companies and even design and offer improvement plans. Each session built on the knowledge gained in the previous session. In addition to the education sessions, each company was tasked with improving a specific process at its respective facility.

Pro-Tech Services wanted to develop an effective new product development process. The company set a goal of transferring the new Snore Sensor to manufacturing within 30 days of introduction at the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS) trade show. Usually the transfer of a new design took over a year, with no scheduled milestones, no accountability, and incomplete

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

critical factors contributing to the delay. Pro-Tech Services used lean manufacturing tools and techniques to develop an effective product development process. The company created a reverse schedule of processes and tasks to be completed, installed measurements and process indicators to monitor progress, and eliminated waste in the process. The company also determined where barriers to change might occur and created countermeasures to deal with them. Using the new product development plan, Pro-Tech met its product to manufacturing goal of 30 days.

Results:

Participated in Value Creation for Technology Companies program.

Revised and improved product development process.

Met company goal of moving product design to manufacturing within a 30 day period.

Testimonial:

“The Washington Manufacturing Services' Value Creation for Technology Companies program was very beneficial to our company. The program was well organized and well run. Working with other companies and seeing the issues they were dealing with helped us understand how to create value and reduce waste in our own organization. We have added valuable tools to our lean manufacturing toolbox.”

Steve Winters, Director of Operations